

Application No. 10/811,168

Filed: March 26, 2004

TC Art Unit: 3677

Confirmation No.: 1995

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A safety buckle, comprising:
- a socket having a cavity with a first surface;
 - a first catch in the cavity and adjoining the first surface and directed away from the first surface;
 - a plug with a central arm for insertion into the socket;
 - a first latch on the central arm sized and positioned to ~~cooperate-permit engagement~~ with the first catch when the plug is inserted into the socket in a first relative orientation to engage releaseably retain the plug and socket together;
 - a second catch or second latch on an opposing side of the cavity or central arm, respectively, and sized and positioned with a symmetry to the first catch or first latch, respectively, to permit an alternate engagement with the corresponding first catch or first latch, such that the socket and plug may be releaseably retained together in a second relative orientation different from the first relative orientation;
 - one of the first or second latches on the central arm being free from engagement when the plug and socket are releaseably retained together; and
 - a disengagement device on the socket or plug and integral with the socket or plug and operable ~~cooperating with the central~~

Application No. 10/811,168

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~~arm or the catch to disengage one or more engagements involving the central arm. the latch and the catch upon actuation of the device, and~~

~~a second latch or catch on an opposing side of the cavity or central arm, respectively, and sized and positioned with a symmetry to the first latch or first catch, respectively, for providing an alternate engagement with the corresponding first catch or first latch, such that the socket and plug may be engaged independent of a relative orientation of the socket and plug.~~

2. (Canceled)

3. (Previously Presented) The buckle according to claim 1, wherein the central arm includes the second latch for cooperating with the first catch of the socket.

4 - 23. (Canceled)

24. (New) The buckle according to claim 1, wherein:
the socket includes the second catch; and
the first latch is a protrusion of the central arm.

Application No. 10/811,168

Filed: March 26, 2004

TC Art Unit: 3677

Confirmation No.: 1995

25. (New) The buckle according to claim 1, wherein:

The cavity comprises a second surface opposing the first surface;

the first catch comprises a first opening in the first surface;

the second catch comprises a second opening in the second surface;

the first and second openings being sized and shaped to cooperate with the first latch on the central arm of the plug.

26. (New) A safety buckle, comprising:

a first buckle member including a first engagement part;

a second buckle member including a second engagement part;

the first and second buckle members being complementary shaped to provide an interactive fit when the first and second buckle members are fitted together in a first relative orientation;

the first and second engagement parts being cooperative to retain the first and second buckle members together when the first and second buckle members are fitted together;

one of the first and second engagement parts having a symmetrically functional counterpart, such that one of the first

Application No. 10/811,168

Filed: March 26, 2004

TC Art Unit: 3677

Confirmation No.: 1995

or second engagement parts cooperates with the counterpart to retain the first and second buckle members together when the first and second buckle members are fitted together in a relative orientation different from the first relative orientation, the other of the first or second engagement parts being free from engagement; and

a disengagement device integral with the first or second buckle member and operable to disengage cooperative engagement parts or the counterpart when actuated.

27. (New) The safety buckle according to claim 26, further comprising a central arm on one of the first or second buckle members, the first or second engagement part being located on the central arm.

28. (New) The safety buckle according to claim 27, wherein the counterpart is located on an opposite side of the central arm from the first or second engagement part.

29. (New) The safety buckle according to claim 26, further comprising two central arms on one of the first or second buckle members, one central arm having one of the first or second

Application No. 10/811,168

Filed: March 26, 2004

TC Art Unit: 3677

Confirmation No.: 1995

engagement parts thereon, and the other central arm having the counterpart.

30. (New) The safety buckle according to claim 27, wherein the engagement part on the central arm is formed as a recess with a shoulder near an end of the central arm, the counterpart also being arranged on the central arm.

31. (New) The safety buckle according to claim 26, wherein one of the first or second engagement parts is located on the disengagement device.

32. (New) A safety buckle that can be clasped in a plurality of orientations, comprising:

a first buckle member and a second buckle member, being complementary shaped to fit together with each other in a clasped condition;

a first engagement structure and a second engagement structure internal to the buckle in the clasped condition with one of the first or second engagement structures on each of the first and second buckle members and sized and positioned to cooperate

Application No. 10/811,168

Filed: March 26, 2004

TC Art Unit: 3677

Confirmation No.: 1995

with each other to retain the first and second buckle members together in the clasped condition in a first orientation;

another engagement structure located on one of the first or second buckle members and sized and positioned to cooperate with one of the first or second engagement structures to retain the first and second buckle members together in the clasped condition in a second orientation different from the first;

another of the first or second engagement structures being free from engagement in the second orientation; and

a disengagement device integral with the first or second buckle member and operable to disengage cooperative engagement structures when actuated.

33. (New) The safety buckle according to claim 32, further comprising a central arm on one of the first or second buckle members, the one of the first or second engagement structures being located on the central arm.

34. (New) The safety buckle according to claim 33, wherein the another engagement structure is located on an opposite side of the central arm from the one of the first or second engagement structures.

-7-

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Application No. 10/811,168

Filed: March 26, 2004

TC Art Unit: 3677

Confirmation No.: 1995

35. (New) The safety buckle according to claim 32, further comprising two central arms on one of the first or second buckle members, one central arm having the one of the first or second engagement structures, and the other central arm having the another engagement structure.

36. (New) The safety buckle according to claim 34, wherein the one of the first or second engagement structures or the another engagement structure on the central arm is formed as a recess with a shoulder near an end of the central arm.

37. (New) The safety buckle according to claim 32, wherein the one of the first or second engagement structures is located on the disengagement device.